

Iowa Fishing Report

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The Iowa Department of Natural Resources issues a weekly fishing report on Thursdays in an effort to provide the latest information heading into the weekend. The weekly fishing report is compiled from information gathered from local bait shops, angler creel surveys, and county and state parks staff. For current information, contact the district fisheries office at the phone number listed at the end of each district report.

Northwest

Spirit Lake (Dickinson): Bluegills are biting in Angler's Bay along the weed beds and open areas and at the North Grade along the remnant lily pad field with small ice jigs tipped with wax worms. Yellow perch are being caught along the rock reefs at Buffalo Run or the footbridge in the mornings using jigging lures tipped with live bait or a slip bobber rig baited with a minnow. For walleyes, fish along the weed lines and rock reefs with jigging lures tipped with a minnow at sunrise and sunset at the footbridge, Templar Park, and between Cottonwood and Big Stoney points. Northern pike are being caught along the rock reefs at Buffalo Run or Cottonwood and Big Stoney points and in Angler's Bay with jigging lures tipped with live bait. Crappies are biting in Anglers Bay along weed lines with small ice jigs tipped with wax worms.

West Okoboji Lake (Dickinson): Bluegills are being caught in Miller's Bay, North Bay, and between Pocahontas and Eagle points in Emerson Bay with small ice jigs tipped with wigglers or wax worms. Crappies are biting between Pocahontas and Eagle points using small ice jigs tipped with wax worms or wigglers. For walleyes, fish the rock reefs in North and Hayward bays with jigging lures tipped with minnows in the morning or evening. Northern pike are being caught on live bait or jigging lures tipped with live bait in Smith and North bays. Yellow perch are being caught from the rock reef in Hayward's Bay with small teardrop jigs tipped with live bait.

East Okoboji Lake (Dickinson): Walleyes are being caught on jigging lures tipped with minnows at rock bars around Stony and Jingle's Point and Parks Marina in the morning and evening.

Sportsman Recreation Area (Palo Alto): Bluegills and crappies are biting on teardrops tipped with live bait.

Virgin Lake (Palo Alto): Yellow perch are being caught on jigging lures tipped with live bait in the morning.

Clear Lake (Cerro Gordo): Yellow bass are still biting on the west end of Clear Lake in 7 to 10 feet of water on jigging spoons around Dodge's Point and Farmer's Beach. A few walleyes and white bass are also being caught while fishing for yellows. Ice depth remains 22 to 26 inches but with the recent warm weather the accesses to the lake have deteriorated, making it difficult to get on in some spots.

Storm Lake (Buena Vista): Walleye fishing has been very slow. Ice conditions have deteriorated so no driving on the ice is recommended. Water is flowing into the lake from the west inlet area.

Brushy Creek Lake (Webster): Ice conditions are unsafe on a majority of the lake. Water is open around most of the trees. Creeks at the north end are opening up the lake. Ice conditions in most of the smaller lakes have deteriorated, especially near shore. Extreme caution should be observed.

For more information on fishing in northwest Iowa, call the regional office in Spirit Lake at 712-336-1840.

Northeast

Mississippi River Pools 9 to 15: Fishing in **Pools 9 to 15** is fair to poor. Sorting is necessary in order to get a few keeper-sized fish. Fishing has been best in mid day to late afternoon. If you are in the right spot at the right time, some anglers are having decent success, especially with crappies.

In **Pools 12 to 15**, the best fishing can be found in O'Leary's Lake, Kehough Slough, Tippy's and Frentress Lake (**Pool 12**), South Sabula Lake, Spring Lake, Edict Lake, and Mickelson's Lake (**Pool 13**), and Rock Creek (**Pool 14**). The best advice at this time of year is to keep moving to find fish.

Black Hawk and Bremer County Area Lakes and Ponds: Ice fishing has been slow after an extended period of deep snow cover followed by a melt event earlier this week. Expect action to pick up during the upcoming weeks as water clarity and oxygen levels improve. Ice anglers should use caution on lake edges and near inlets because ice has eroded during recent warm weather.

Casey Lake (Tama): Bluegill fishing is fair to good around stake beds and brush piles located in 10 foot of water or deeper near the center and on the east side of the lake. Ice jigs tipped with a wax worm work well for bluegills. Use caution entering and leaving the ice as well as near the inlet and outlet.

Lake Delhi (Delaware): Fishing is not recommended following a runoff event on the Maquoketa River that produced river levels near flood stage and may have weakened the ice in many locations.

Lake Hendricks (Howard): Anglers continue to work to catch fish, but nice sized crappies and bluegills are starting to bite on a jig tipped with a wax worm. Try fishing at various depths as fish are likely suspended off the bottom at this time of year.

Lake Meyer (Winnebago): Fishing may start to pick up this week with warmer weather and new water entering the lake. Anglers have been using light colored jigs tipped with a wax worm. Crappies were biting, but you need a soft touch to hook the fish. Try fishing lures about 3 to 6 feet under the ice. The best time to fish seems to be around mid day.

Volga Lake (Fayette): Anglers reported a slow down in bites, but this should be changing soon as the snow melts off the ice. Try fishing a different spot if a fish does not nibble right away. Also try suspending lures in 3 to 6 feet of water this time of year. There are a few areas with water on top of the ice out from the boat ramp.

Northeast Iowa Trout Streams: Trout streams were inundated with water earlier this past week; however, fishing conditions have improved and most streams are in fishable condition. Angling during the early morning hours may be best before midday runoffs occur on warm days. Expect quality trout fishing opportunities if daytime temperatures remain around freezing. Trout stockings on urban lakes include:

North Prairie in Cedar Falls (January 17), Heritage Pond in Dubuque (January 21), Blue Pit in Mason City (January 22), Bacon Creek Lake in Sioux City (January 29).

For information on fishing in northeast Iowa, call the regional office in Manchester at 563-927-3276.

Southeast

Mississippi River Pools 16 to 20: With recent warm weather and rain, river levels are on the rise throughout Pools 16 to 20. River levels are forecasted to crest over the weekend and begin to slowly fall throughout the week. The main channel does have some large chunks of ice floating in it so take caution when boating. **Ice conditions in the backwaters are unsafe for ice fishing.** Many of the boat ramps are open but conditions could change due to cold weather predicted over the next week.

In **Pool 16**, tailwater stage at Lock and Dam 15 has risen to 8.33 feet. Fishing for walleye and saugers below Lock and Dam 15 has been good on jigs and minnows. Some walleye and saugers are also being caught behind some of the wing dams with deeper holes. The Marquette St. boat ramp is open.

In **Pool 17**, tailwater stage at Lock and Dam 16 is 6.96 feet. Tailwater fishing for walleyes and saugers has slowed down some over the past couple of days. Most fish are being caught on jigs and minnows. The ramps in Muscatine are open. In **Pool 18**, tailwater stage at Lock and Dam 17 is 9.41 feet. Tailwater fishing for walleyes and saugers has slowed down due to rising water levels. The ramp at Toolesboro is open.

In **Pool 19**, tailwater stage at Lock and Dam 18 is 5.97 feet. Walleye and sauger fishing in the tailwaters has been slow. In **Pool 20**, tailwater stage at Lock and Dam 19 is 8.39 feet. No fishing report.

Lake Darling (Washington): The lake is completely drained.

Lake Belva Deer (Keokuk): Unsafe ice conditions.

Lake Geode (Henry): Unsafe ice conditions.

Lake Rathbun (Appanoose): Ice conditions are not suitable for ice fishing.

Lake Sugema (Van Buren): Ice conditions are not suitable for ice fishing.

Lake Keomah (Mahaska): Ice conditions are not suitable for ice fishing.

Lake Wapello (Davis): The lake has been completely drained.

Lake Miami (Monroe): Ice conditions are not suitable for ice fishing.

JONES, CEDAR, LINN, JOHNSON, BENTON, IOWA, POWESHIEK, TAMA, GRUNDY, and MARSHALL COUNTIES: Ice fishing is still taking place in many areas. However, use extreme caution when venturing out on the ice. The thickness may be variable, especially around the edges where thawing occurs fastest. The predicted snowfall will also make it tough to see/judge the ice conditions.

For more information on fishing in southeast Iowa, call the regional office in Brighton at 319-694-2430.

Southwest

Ice conditions have deteriorated quickly this week. Open water or weak ice around the edges has made access difficult.

Hickory Grove (Story): Early in the week bluegill fishing was good later in the afternoon. A few fish are still being found suspended around structure in 20 to 25 feet of

water. Try areas where there has been less angling pressure. The bluegills are in the 7 to 8-inch range with some up to 9 inches.

Big Creek (Polk): Crappie fishing is still fair. The crappie bite is best in the evenings after around 7 p.m. Electronics are a big help as the crappies are suspended 5 to 10 feet off the bottom in 30 plus feet of water. Setting a lantern or other light source on the ice while fishing seems to help attract and hold the fish. Chartreuse or glowing jigs tipped with wax worms or spikes have been the best producers.

Contact Ben Dodd at (515) 432-2823, Ext.108, for information on the above area lakes

Ice conditions have deteriorated during the past several days and many ponds and small lakes are entirely open. Most mid-sized and large lakes have a 10 to 40 feet wide ring of open water around the perimeter. Walking on the ice is not recommended anywhere in the southwest or south central portion of the state. Anglers can use a boat to access some the same areas.

Three Mile Lake (Union): Ice is poor and open water exists around the edges.

Twelve Mile Lake (Union): The lake has areas of open water and the ice is in poor condition.

Lake Icaria (Adams): The mid portion of the lake is open.

Contact Gary Sobotka at (641) 464-3108 for information on the above area lakes.

Ice conditions have deteriorated with recent snow melt and warm temperatures. The perimeter of most lakes and ponds are open. Ice fishing is not recommended.

Contact Bryan Hayes at (712) 769-2587 for information on the above area lakes.

For more information on general fishing in southwest Iowa, call the regional office in Lewis at 712-769-2587.

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